

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
-----232020 016423 /41  
O 232003Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5848  
USMISSION USBERLIN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 03292

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR PGOV US WB UK FR UR  
SUBJECT: ATTEMPTED SUICIDE BY HESS

REFS: (A) USBER 551; (B) BONN 3233; (C) USBER 539

1. UK REP (CARTER) ASKED FRENCH AND US REPS TO STAY  
BEHIND AFTER BONN GROUP MEETING THIS EVENING (BEFORE  
WE RECEIVED REF A) TO DISCUSS HESS SITUATION  
TRIPARTITELY. BRITISH EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED A REPORT  
FROM UK MISSION BERLIN (UKBER) POSING THREE  
QUESTIONS ON WHICH GUIDANCE FROM EMBASSY AND LONDON  
WAS REQUESTED BY TOMORROW MORNING (FEBRUARY 24):

A. THE THREE ALLIED GOVERNORS, ACCORDING TO THE  
BRITISH REPORT, WANT THE SCHEDULED VISIT OF HESS' SON  
TO TAKE PLACE AS SCHEDULED ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25,  
BUT THE SOVIETS WISH TO CANCEL THE VISIT AS  
"PUNISHMENT" FOR HESS.

B. IF THE VISIT TAKES PLACE, SHOULD HESS' SON  
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BE TOLD BEFOREHAND OF THE SUICIDE ATTEMPT? THE THREE  
ALLIES THINK HE SHOULD BE, WHEREAS THE SOVIETS SAY NO.

C. HOW SHOULD THE PRESS BE HANDLED? UKBER IS  
RECOMMENDING THE SAME PRESS GUIDANCE AS IN REF (A)  
(I.E., IF ASKED, CONFIRM THE SUICIDE ATTEMPT, ADDING  
THAT HESS IS UNDER MEDICAL CARE AND IN GOOD CONDITION).

2. DISCUSSION BY ALLIED REPS WAS CONDITIONED BY VIEW OF UK LEGAL ADVISOR (CHAMBERLAIN), IN WHICH FRENCH REP (BOISSIEU) CONCURRED, THAT IT IS WITHIN THE POWER OF THE SOVIETS TO PREVENT THE FEBRUARY 25 VISIT OF HESS' SON AND ALSO THAT BECAUSE OF PRISON RULES ON CONFIDENTIALITY CONCERNING WHAT GOES ON INSIDE THE PRISON, THE SOVIETS WOULD BE ABLE TO VETO THE GIVING OUT OF INFORMATION EITHER TO THE FAMILY OR TO THE PRESS.

3. ON THE BASIS OF THIS UNDERSTANDING, THE CONSENSUS OF THE MEETING WAS AS FOLLOWS:

A. IF THE SOVIETS DO FORCE CANCELLATION OF THE FEBRUARY 25 VISIT, THE ALLIED GOVERNORS SHOULD INSIST ON AGREEMENT ON AN EARLY SUBSTITUTE DATE FOR THE VISIT.

B. IF HESS' SON IS INFORMED ABOUT THE SUICIDE ATTEMPT, THE FRENCH GOVERNOR SHOULD ALSO URGE THAT HE NOT PUBLICIZE IT IN THE BELIEF THAT IT WOULD NOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF HIS FATHER TO HAVE THE MATTER IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN, PARTICULARLY IF THIS WERE DONE AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE SOVIETS.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
-----232020 016428 /42  
O 232003Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5849  
USMISSION USBERLIN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 03292

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C. ON PRESS GUIDANCE, ALLIED REPS RECOGNIZED THAT, IF THE INFORMATION LEAKS, IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT

FOR THE ALLIES TO ADHERE TO A NO COMMENT POLICY. IF, HOWEVER, THERE ARE IN FACT PRISON RULES REQUIRING QUADRIpartite AGREEMENT TO OFFICIAL STATEMENTS BY ANY OF THE FOUR ON SUCH MATTERS, IT WOULD NOT SERVE OUR LONGER-RANGE INTERESTS TO VIOLATE SUCH RULES BY MAKING AN OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT WITHOUT SOVIET AGREEMENT. THEREFORE, ALLIED PRESS SPOKESMAN, RATHER THAN TAKING QUESTIONS AND AGREEING TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER, SHOULD STATE AT THE OUTSET TO ANY JOURNALISTS WHO ASK THAT AS A MATTER OF POLICY WE DO NOT COMMENT ON EVENTS TAKING PLACE INSIDE THE PRISON. IF APPROPRIATE, THE SPOKESMAN MIGHT, HOWEVER, ADD THAT HESS IS IN GOOD HEALTH.

4. CARTER STRESSED THAT FINAL GUIDANCE FOR UKBER WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM LONDON WHERE THE MATTER OF PUBLICITY MAY WELL BE VIEWED DIFFERENTLY IN VIEW OF THE LIKELIHOOD OF A QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT SOONER OR LATER.

5. COMMENT: IF CHAMBERLAIN'S KNOWLEDGE OF PRISON  
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RULES IS FAULTY AND WESTERN ALLIES ARE FREE TO MAKE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OR STATEMENT OF THIS SORT WITHOUT SOVIET AGREEMENT, THIS WOULD OF COURSE SHAKE THE RATIONALE FOR THE PRESS POLICY THE EMBASSIES ARE RECOMMENDING.  
STOESSEL

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, PGOV, US, WB, UK, FR, UR, (HESS, RUDOLF)  
**To:** STATE USBERLIN  
**Type:** TE  
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